
SECTION: BREASTFEEDING

SUBJECT: Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program

ITEM: Overview

Federal Vision:

- Have Breastfeeding Peer Counseling be a core service in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program; and
- Combine the Breastfeeding Peer Counseling (BPC) Program with the ongoing WIC breastfeeding promotion efforts to increase fully and combination breastfeeding initiation and duration rates among WIC participants.

State of California WIC breastfeeding vision:

- Breastfeeding is the norm for WIC mothers and their infants up to age one year and beyond; and
- WIC is known in the community as a source for breastfeeding assistance and information.

Description of the BPC Program

The BPC Program is based on the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDAs) *Loving Support® Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program*. The program utilizes peers to encourage and support WIC mothers to breastfeed their infants via a mother-to-mother connection. The Peer Counselors (PCs) are paid paraprofessionals within WIC, who are recruited and hired from the population they serve. The PCs are well trained and supported by breastfeeding experts. The goal of the program is to increase the initiation, exclusivity, and duration of breastfeeding.

I. Program Operations

A. Local Agencies (LAs) with BPC Programs shall:

1. spend the majority of their BPC Program funds on peer counselor direct services;

2. establish standardized breastfeeding peer counseling program policies and procedures;
3. provide a physical location with a desk, telephone, and computer with internet and Peer Counselor Database (PCDB) access, where PCs can provide services and document contacts;
4. provide PCs with adequate compensation;
5. submit a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Request for Funding (RFF) to the State Agency (SA) if partnering with another local WIC agency or other program;
6. develop a procedure for identifying PC participants in ISIS or another location that allows all non-PC staff to easily identify the participant's PC; and
7. execute a signed MOU with Public Health Foundation Enterprises, Inc. for use of the web-based PCDB when funded through the USDA BPC Program.

General

- I. Classes taught by PCs shall not be counted as a nutrition education contact in ISIS unless the PC is partially funded as a WIC Nutrition Assistant (WNA) and the class meets the requirements for nutrition education contacts as described in the *WPM Nutrition Education Requirements*. If the LA is using the PC/WNA model, time spent as a WNA shall be funded by non-BPC Program funds.
- II. Males and dietetic interns do not meet the definition of PC (a paraprofessional who has breastfed) and cannot be hired using BPC Program funds.
- III. PCs who become (International Board Certified Lactation Consultant) IBCLCs may continue to work as PCs at the PC salary, as long as the PCs continue to work within the scope of PC practice and the PCs and the agency mutually agree to this arrangement. A PC who is a part time PC and a part time IBCLC shall be paid an IBCLC salary while performing IBCLC duties.
- IV. The LA may allow BPC Program staff to assist non-BPC Program WIC mothers for a limited amount of time, in situations where a BPC participant and WIC mother are together. On-going PC services, however, are not allowed for non-BPC Program participants.

Funding

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- I. USDA funding for the BPC Program is available through special grant funds. The number of Local Agencies (LAs) with an USDA funded BPC Program varies, according to the amount of funds available and the number of LAs that apply for those funds. Not every LA has a BPC Program. Additionally, agencies with a BPC Program may not have the program available at all of their clinic sites. The priority for use of funds is to hire and train peer counselors for direct services to WIC participants and funds are restricted specifically for the BPC Program.
 - II. All BPC Programs operated within the LA shall be considered as a single BPC Program by the SA, regardless of funding source, and shall follow the BPC Program policies.
 - III. A limited amount of BPC Program funds may be used for advertising the BPC Program. The Nutrition Service and Administrative Cost (NSA) funds may be used for ads that promote breastfeeding in general. BPC Program funds are only for the BPC Program.

Authority

All State Memorandum (ASM) 04-27 – Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Grants/Training, April 8, 2004

Loving Support© Through Peer Counseling: A Journey Together, November, 2011

Loving Support© Frequently Asked Questions 2011

Loving Support© Model for a Successful Peer Counseling Program

Allowable Costs for Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Funds, USDA November 2011